

Reader

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Scott Foresman Reading Street 4.1.3



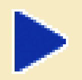
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Our Trip Out East

by Luz Nuncio Schick







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My older sisters and I pose for the camera.

In the summer of 1959, I was four years old. My family took a trip to the East Coast. We lived in Chicago at that time. I remember this trip well. It was one of the happiest times for my family.

When I look at photographs from that trip, I can hear Mami and Papi speaking to us in gentle, loving Spanish. This is a photo of my sisters and me posing for the camera.

The people in our family were my parents Papi and Mami, my sisters Pela, Goly, Cristi, and me, Chiquis. Abuelita (Grandma) was visiting from Monterrey, Mexico. She came on the trip with us. Abuelita was Mami's mom. I think that the trip was so happy because Abuelita came with us.

Ever since we had left Mexico in 1956, Mami had missed our homeland. But she missed Abuelita more than anything else. She would always send postcards of Chicago, inviting my grandmother to visit us.





Mami also sent photographs like the one above. She wanted Abuelita to see my three sisters and me. Abuelita had never seen the baby of the family, Cristi, who was born in Chicago.

In this photograph, we are downtown by Lake Michigan. We liked to go there and watch the sailboats go by. When the sun went down, we would watch the buildings of the Chicago skyline light up.

skyline: outline of city buildings, as seen against the sky



Goly, Pela, Cristi, and Abuelita with our station wagon

Soon after Abuelita came, we started on our trip. We went because Papi had a job waiting for him in Flemington, New Jersey. The job would be only for a few months, but Papi was very excited about it. Papi loved to see different places.

We went by car, in a sky-blue 1953 Savoy station wagon. Our station wagon was not very comfortable compared to cars today. The seats were hard, and it had no air conditioning.

station wagon: automobile with a rear door and extra room

But to us, our station wagon was wonderful. It took us from Chicago, Illinois, to Flemington, New Jersey. It never broke down. It carried us inside the car. It carried our many suitcases outside, tied on the roof. It had big round headlights that looked like eyes. And it was a soft, pale blue, like the summer sky.





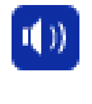
Here are Goly and Cristi on the hood of the station wagon. Abuelita is smiling as Goly teaches Cristi how to show that she is one year old.

I can still remember where Goly and I rode in the station wagon. It was just a big, flat space in the very back. Mami put down a blanket for us. Goly and I sat there, cross-legged, watching the road behind us for hours. When we got sleepy, we would lie down. We heard the sound of the tires on the road. The low, steady hum put us to sleep, like a lullaby.

lullaby: soft song that helps a baby sleep




In front of the farmhouse in Flemington



When we got to Flemington, Papi found a place for us to live. We rented part of a farmhouse. The owners lived in the other part. The owners were nice. Somehow we understood them, even though they only spoke English and we only spoke Spanish.



Extend Language **Compound Words**

Compound words are made up of two words. *Homeland* is made up of *home* and *land.* Knowing the meaning of the small words helps you to understand the compound word.

Can you tell the meaning of the following compound words from the two small words in them?

postcard skyline suitcase farmhouse






In this photo, Goly and I are watching Cristi walk.



One day walking through the farm fields, we found a place where chamomile grew. This was very good, because Mami used it for making chamomile tea. We filled our fists with the tiny, daisy-like flowers for Mami. When we opened our hands, they smelled sweet, like apples.

One time, under a tree, we found the shell of a robin's egg. We were amazed that an egg could be so blue and so small. We also saw animals we had never seen in Chicago. Deer and rabbits jumped out of the fields before our eyes.

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chamomile: plant with flowers and leaves that can be used for tea





Papi took us to see New York City one day. Mami and Papi loved Central Park and the horse-drawn carriages taking people around.

Then we went for a walk around the city. The buildings were taller and more crowded together than in Chicago. I remember looking up and up at the towering skyscrapers until I felt dizzy.

We had a wonderful day in New York City!



We left Flemington when Papi's job ended and went back to Chicago. Abuelita stayed with us for a while. Then she had to go back to Mexico.

We went to Union Station to put Abuelita on the train to Mexico. The train rumbled and hissed as passengers got on. Mami and Abuelita held each other for a long time. They both cried. Then Abuelita hugged each of us tightly, one last time, and got on the train.

This was the last time we saw Abuelita. She died three years later.







Abuelita, Mami, Goly, and me in New York City

After that trip out East, we took many others. Papi's job took us to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for a while, and to Puerto Rico for two years. Papi made sure we saw other great American cities, like Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

But our trip to the East was the happiest one we ever took. Even now, looking at the photographs makes me happy. I have Abuelita, Mami, and Papi again. They are speaking to me in soft, tender Spanish, standing just a few steps from me, and I feel their love.



Talk About It

1. Why did Mami want Abuelita to visit her in Chicago?
2. Why was the trip out East such a happy time for the family?

Write About It

3. Pick a place that is described in this story. On a separate sheet of paper, write about what the family did there.

Extend Language

Some words in English sound like the noise they name. The word *hissed* in the next sentence sounds like a noise the train makes: *The train rumbled and hissed as passengers got on.*

What is the English word for the sound a camera makes when it takes a photograph?

Photographs
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